

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**STRATEGY AT WAR:  
A POLICY LEFT WITHOUT MEANS**

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## ABSTRACT

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The United States does not have a cogent National Military Strategy supportive of its current National Security Strategy. The relationship between the National Security Strategy and the National Military Strategy is such that military strategy draws direction from national strategy. The military means are not aligned with the political object. The history of strategic military theory demonstrates that the Clausewitzian relationship between the two must exist to achieve national objectives for foreign policy to succeed. The relationship is fractured because the 1997 National Military Strategy is out of date and the 2001 Quadrennial Defense Report cannot fill the void because it does not support the preemption corollary in the 2002 National Security Strategy and its sub-strategies. The national strategy also places a premium on the use of force in pursuit of national interests while the goals and tenets of the 2001 Quadrennial Defense Report remain fixed upon how and what to change the military into. The fracture reveals that the Department of Defense does not appreciate the totality of the change in today's global environment. The Department of Defense can mend the strategic fracture by publishing a National Military Strategy that answers the employment and force structure demands of the national strategy. Military transformation efforts cannot be ignored. However, transformation is an adjunct of strategy and it will naturally occur through adaptation to the new global security environment.



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## STRATEGY AT WAR: A POLICY LEFT WITHOUT MEANS

The notion of military strategy implies an organized authority capable of sustained action along lines of policy.

—Paul H. Nitze, Address to the Army  
War College, 27 August 1958

The United States does not have a cogent National Military Strategy supportive of its current National Security Strategy. The 1997 National Military Strategy is outdated and it is not relevant today. The 2001 Quadrennial Defense Report is not military strategy because it does not derive strategic direction from the political objectives contained in the 2002 National Security Strategy. Attempts to base a new National Military Strategy upon the 2001 Quadrennial Defense Review will be ill conceived as well. An examination of the historical and theoretical underpinnings of the relationship between national and military strategy will illustrate that Clausewitzian theory is central to the formulation of military strategy. In addition, the current national strategy and the 2001 Quadrennial Defense Report are juxtaposed to diagnose that a fractured strategic relationship exists between the strategies. The fracture exists because the latter cannot structure the means that the former requires to achieve clearly stated ends. Moreover, the new rhetoric of transformation does little to heal the wound. The fracture reveals that the Department of Defense does not appreciate the sea change in the global environment. Finally, a favorable prognosis can be realized when the Department of Defense publishes a National Military Strategy that derives direction from the political object.

### THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE STRATEGIES

The relationship between the National Security Strategy and the National Military Strategy is such that military strategy draws direction from national strategy. As a state pursues its national interests, military force is a political instrument. Hence, military strategy is inextricably bound to the national interest by serving as a conduit to achieve political objectives.<sup>1</sup> This is an easily identifiable Clausewitzian view of the relationship between national and military strategy. It is also apparent that national strategy is the development and use of a nation's instruments of power to secure national objectives. Therefore, military strategy remains the employment of armed force to secure the objectives of national policy by the threat or application thereof.<sup>2</sup> Although the Clausewitzian view may be discounted as a waning thought in today's modern asymmetric world, three determinants make Clausewitzian thought in this regard a truism for now and in the future.



The first determinant is that war embraces much more than politics. It is always an expression of culture and its forms.<sup>3</sup> Keegan in discounting Clausewitzian theory uses this determinant to divorce politics from the people. He is correct in that war is more than politics. The more in this case is culture, and culture molds politics. Clausewitzian thought emerges when military strategy draws direction from political objectives. Coming full circle in a democratic society, a people and their culture determine the politics that provide focus for the use of armed force. The second determinant is that in a modern state war is not possible outside of a political context. Finally, the history of military strategic theory is the third determinant that demonstrates how Clausewitzian thought persists in shaping military strategy.

A strategic imperative carried forth over the past three hundred years can be described in terms of connections. The judgments made by political leaders and commanders during war must be intertwined.<sup>4</sup> Army leaders quickly found that politics were indispensable to command and they remained connected to military operations in war.<sup>5</sup> During the American Civil War, for example, President Lincoln first acknowledged that by waging war he was not merely pursuing political ends by different means. While obliged to wage war, he would do so in a humane and conciliatory way as possible.<sup>6</sup> Major General George B. McClellan recognized this particular dimension of national strategy at the onset of the war and employed his forces to only that extent.<sup>7</sup> However, as Lincoln recognized that conciliatory policy would not yield a Union, punishment and the application of the harsh hand of war became an element of national strategy.<sup>8</sup> Drawing from political objectives, General Ulysses S. Grant came to the fore and accepted a Napoleonic military strategy of annihilation as the prescription for victory in a war of popular nationalism.<sup>9</sup> The Second World War also illustrates that a proper relationship between the strategies is central to success.

Prior to the Second World War, prewar strategy in the United States centered on Army-Navy prejudices and the fight for limited resources. Strategy became clouded by thoughts on service roles such as coastal defense and expeditionary forces.<sup>10</sup> Before 1939, the American Army served as little more than a constabulary force in the continental United States without any idea of the challenges it would face in the next few years.<sup>11</sup> However, as the United States persevered through the Second World War, national policy and military strategy took on an almost symbiotic relationship. In a mobilized environment of global war, a tethered relationship between strategies is expected because the very culture of this cataclysmic era demanded it. How else could the American strategy of annihilation through a war of mass and concentration be conjoined with a British peripheral strategy if not through a common understanding of end results?<sup>12</sup> As the United States entered the Missile Age, NSC 68 and the events of the Cold

War once again illustrate that war plans are inconceivable without insight into the political condition.<sup>13</sup>

NSC 68 codified the national movement along what could be seen of the bipolar road ahead. With the inception of a formal National Security Strategy in 1987 during the Cold War, military strategy derived direction from it.<sup>14</sup> Military force would be used to contain the threat of Soviet ideology through forms of active and passive deterrence. The National Security Strategy, much like today, provided vision, priorities, and a sense of how the instruments of national power were to be arrayed.<sup>15</sup> The ancillary construct of mutually assured destruction kept the military instrument of power carefully sheathed. This left diplomacy to wield the influence that military deterrence backed up. Military strategy and high politics became issues that led policymakers to look at economic advantage as a substitute for military power. Military power was associated with high politics, a phrase used to refer to the way Congress and the executive branch handled national security in the Nuclear Age. It particularly denotes the way Congress deferred to the President and the way the public rallied to support the state in times of crisis.<sup>16</sup> Both documents made an impact as the standards for the direction national security would take during the next few years. With the War on Terrorism only recently begun, the history of strategic theory illustrates that military strategy must continue to draw direction from national strategy.

With the fall of the Berlin Wall divergent views about security threats, the military forces needed to meet them, and the employment of those forces have left the American concept of state, in relation to security and the military, unfocused and in flux.<sup>17</sup> The 1997 National Military Strategy with its tenets of Shape, Respond, and Prepare drew direction from the Clinton administration's strategy of Engagement and Enlargement.<sup>18</sup> Both strategies emphasized a positioning for change in a new world order. Meanwhile, America prepared for the uncertainties inherent to change. Today, the relationship between the strategies is fractured because what is offered as military strategy is not synchronized with the current national strategy. The political objective is unmistakable, but the military strategy is failing to follow the correct direction to it.

#### **A FRACTURED RELATIONSHIP**

The 1997 National Military Strategy is obviously outdated. The military implications of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks and the 2002 National Security Strategy surpass its tenets. The current National Security Strategy purposefully adapted to a renewed global threat to the national interests. Conversely, the formulation of a National Military Strategy remained mired in the years old bureaucratic process of how and what to change the military into. Change

occurred as America went to war against terrorism in Iraq. America remains there without a transparent military strategy that draws from the blend of culture and high politics so necessary to prosecute a sustained military effort against terrorism. The United States possesses a number of classified joint plans. They are not a strategy. A visible military strategy is the precursor to plans that will make the War on Terrorism an American success story. Juxtaposing the 2002 National Security Strategy to include its sub-strategies and the 2001 Quadrennial Defense Report will delineate the fracture.

The current National Security Strategy places a premium on the use of force in pursuit of national interests. This strategy shifts policy from a reactive to a proactive mode because of the security demands of the War on Terrorism. The United States cannot depend on a fifty-year old containment policy and liberal grand strategy to chart a course from the Cold War to an even newer world order.<sup>19</sup> Both became successful in promoting security protection and an open world economy under the auspices of benign power. However, the new realities of catastrophic terrorism and unipolar power combine to emphasize the tyranny of time available to counter new threats.<sup>20</sup> Terrorism did in fact survive the Cold War, but American national interests seek to preserve the global bargains of security and economics with a pointed stick:

- Political and economic freedom
- Peaceful relations with other countries
- Respect for human dignity
- Security of the homeland<sup>21</sup>

These interests in themselves are not new and they are relatively unchanged from past declarations. In fact, they stress the importance of growing international cooperation and affirm the necessity of Washington's bilateral alliances.<sup>22</sup> The pointed stick is methodology.

The manner in which the national interests will be achieved reveals a paradigmatic shift from a strategy of decades' old deterrence to a strategy of prevention perhaps read as preemption. In this regard, United States policy toward international terrorism contains a significant military component reflected in current operations in Afghanistan, Djibouti, Iraq, and the Philippines. It is further reflected in planned deployments to Yemen and the former Soviet republic of Georgia.<sup>23</sup> It is definitely a strategy that will often have limited intermediate objectives in the War on Terrorism, but it is foremost a strategy requiring decisive military force now. The national interests will be achieved through a distinctly American internationalism, and five of the eight methods for the realization of our national interests are force oriented:

- Champion human dignity abroad
- Defeat of global terrorism

- Defuse regional conflict
- Prevent being threatened by weapons of mass destruction
- Transform national security institutions<sup>24</sup>

They are definitely not domestically focused. Furthermore, diplomacy in these methods is subsumed to decisive action by the tyranny of time itself. Whether America champions, defuses, or more accurately prevents, military force will sustain human dignity, keep the peace, and defeat the terrorists. When these methods are coupled with a preemption corollary, the military is positioned as the first instrument of national power to be used in proactively vouchsafing national interests.<sup>25</sup> This is what must be drawn from the national strategy.

The instruments of national power are unmistakably ordered in the War on Terrorism. As the first one in the array, the military must be properly structured to succeed. The Department of Defense speaks of revolutionary technologies. Nevertheless, shortages in repair parts, lack of training funds, turbulence associated with force reduction, and a dramatic increase in overseas deployments places great strains on the military. Revolution in Military Affairs advocates still argue that it is unnecessary for military strategy to be grounded in current realities because better technology is on the way.<sup>26</sup> The current reality is that the 2002 National Security Strategy demands a great deal of the military, but the military is badly structured for additional preemptive strikes of any magnitude. Consider the national sub-strategies and it becomes apparent that the current composition and might of the Armed Forces can be easily diluted.

The *National Strategy for Homeland Security* is explicit in defining what is expected of the military today. The document defines a force with strategic reach as opposed to a force that only contains threats within the American borders. Additionally, the preemption corollary is at the very heart of homeland defense:

- Prevention of terrorist attacks within the United States is the first objective
- Detection yields preemptive, preventive, and protective action against terrorism
- Preemptive and preventive actions will require military force
- Military support to civil authorities remains a major initiative
- Homeland security does not stop at American borders
- The United States will help foreign nations fight terrorism<sup>27</sup>

Homeland Security is very dependent upon the military. The document excerpts above illustrate that the first step in securing the homeland occurs beyond American borders. Security within national borders places the Department of Defense as lead agency or in support of another lead agency. In both cases, the military will be at the very forefront of national security efforts.

Abroad or on American soil, Homeland Security rests upon military might. The Armed Forces will be engaged throughout the operational continuum of war abroad in securing the homeland. They will be decisively engaged in multilateral security cooperation efforts and preemptive strikes. The nature of modern terrorism according to this sub-strategy requires a global approach to prevention.<sup>28</sup> Military support to civil authorities, international peacekeeping, and peace enforcement missions cannot be discounted. This sub-strategy in itself is well beyond Department of Defense plans to deter forward in four regions with the capability to swiftly defeat the efforts of two threats in a region and winning decisively in one while defending at home.<sup>29</sup> Other sub-strategies follow the same suit.

*The National Strategy for Combating Terrorism* further amplifies the new preemptive strategy. The first element in defeating terrorism is an aggressive offensive strategy that:

- Eliminates capabilities that allows terrorists to exist and operate
- Attacks terrorist sanctuaries, leadership, command, control, and communications
- Creates an international environment inhospitable to terrorists and all those who support them<sup>30</sup>

The terminology is definitely force oriented. When it is combined with a national intent to stop global terrorism, the military tasks inferred grow to be proportionately monumental. The proportionality becomes exponential when national strategy addresses weapons of mass destruction (WMD).

*The National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction* is extremely direct in its military application to countering this threat. This document leaves little room for doubt in just what the political object is in that the military will:

- Defend against the full range of possible WMD employment scenarios
- Possess the full range of operational capabilities to counter the threat and use of WMD by states and terrorists against the United States, friends, and allies
- Interdict as the critical lead in the strategy to combat WMD
- Remain an essential element of contemporary deterrent postures
- Respond with rapid attribution and robust strike capability<sup>31</sup>

The direction for the Armed Forces is crystalline in this context. They will preempt, defend, and respond against the source of any WMD threat or attack. The primary objective of responding to or deterring an imminent attack is to disrupt and eliminate the threat of future attack. The 2001 Quadrennial Defense Report (QDR), in light of the national strategies, is at odds with the political object today. For that matter, any future military strategy based upon the 2001 QDR will remain at odds with today's realities.

It cannot be argued that the 2001 QDR came about before the 2002 National Security Strategy. The 2001 QDR has also loosely metamorphosed into the '01 QDR Defense Strategy as a series of traveling PowerPoint slideshows that attempt to define today's military strategy. It also appears that the fiscal year 2004 National Defense Authorization Act may force the production of a new National Military Strategy at the direction of Congress. This is seen by many to be an opportunity to shape a new force-sizing construct. However, a new National Military Strategy is anticipated to remain largely unchanged from the 2001 QDR.<sup>32</sup> It is arguable that the publication of a new national strategy after the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, D.C. should have brought about a National Military Strategy aligned with the realities of the War on Terror. More specifically, it should have illuminated the need for a military strategy three years ago that structures the Armed Forces to answer the demands of preemption.

The 2001 QDR or any variation thereof cannot serve as military strategy in a temporal sense. That operations in Afghanistan began only sixty days after the release of the 2001 QDR is irrefutable evidence that the preemption corollary transcended its goals and tenets in very short order. The 2001 QDR does not draw direction from the 2002 National Security Strategy in answering the requirements for a military poised as the first instrument of national power in a preventive war on terrorism. At issue in this case is that the transparency created by an aligned military strategy gives focus, order, and synergy to what will be a very long and protracted war against terrorism. The 2001 QDR cannot provide this because it is bound in the development of transformational thought that is already left behind in today's global war.

The policy goals in the 2001 QDR are rooted in outdated concepts of response and deterrence. Response and deterrence in the context of this document are those of nearly a decade ago. They are not the proactive elements of strategy found in the national strategies. These goals primarily grapple with how and what the military should transform to instead of defining a force for preemption. Transforming is not definitive especially when a national strategy of preemptive internationalism is in operation now. The policy goals do not bond to the methodology for a distinctly American internationalism:

- Assure allies
- Dissuade future military competition
- Deter
- Respond<sup>33</sup>

These policy goals are incongruous with a force oriented national strategy. Despite the fact that the same goals appear in the Secretary of Defense's 2002 Annual Defense Report to Congress,

old concepts of security are no longer completely relevant. In this regard, there are powerful internal and external forces that argue that there is no longer a requirement for the United States to sustain a policy of deterrence and second order response.<sup>34</sup> The policy goals are shadows of the 1997 National Military Strategy and they hearken to a policy of reactive containment.

The tenets of United States defense strategy in the 2001 QDR speak primarily to the transformation of the Armed Forces. They do not strategically direct the military towards preemptive operations:

- Manage risk
- Use a capabilities-based approach
- Defend the United States and project power
- Strengthen alliances and partnerships
- Maintain favorable regional balances
- Develop a broad portfolio of military capabilities
- Transform Defense<sup>35</sup>

These tenets cannot be taken as the strategic groundwork that answers the call of the national strategy because, other than transformation, they are trapped in the defense orthodoxies of the Cold War. Transformation itself in this case is only a wish for the future. Even the recent Annual Defense Report to Congress moves more toward transformational vagaries than meeting the force-sizing challenges of preemption head-on. War and transformation attempt to share the same seat.<sup>36</sup> The 2001 QDR does not provide a linked and overarching framework for rapid and precise military operations that can achieve decisive results in the near term. As some would have it, technology will provide not only a capability it will provide a strategy.<sup>37</sup> Since it is argued that transformation does not have an end state, what remains is a strategy of rhetoric that attempts to explain defense strategy.

Beyond the many interpretations of technological military advancement, there is the rhetoric of unofficial military strategy that attempts to answer the demands of national strategy. This rhetoric only serves to obscure the realities of the current war by framing nebulous change in a distant future rather than shaping the adaptation and evolution that is occurring now. Instead of addressing the demands that the new strategy places on a military ravaged by the unfulfilled prophecies of peace dividends, the rhetoric remains unspecific and often contradictory:

- Effects-based operations adhere to the enemy's political objectives to narrow their strategic choices
- Conflict is altered by change that cannot be outpaced
- At the strategic level, a nation is confined to forward positioning forces, deployment from home, or alliances in securing its interests overseas
- United States defense strategy relies on a deter-forward force that can defeat a threat with minimal reinforcements from home
- Strategic effectiveness entails rebalancing the military so that it relies on forces forward<sup>38</sup>

The center of this form of thought resides in policies of containment that were prevalent decades ago. America relied on forward deployed forces for years. Admittedly, significant changes in the services are necessary and long overdue in some cases. However, it is dangerous to regard change as a virtue in itself. Change has become a mantra and the general need to adapt to today's new realities in defense give Out-Of-The-Box ideas special status regardless of quality or degree of development.<sup>39</sup> At this point, despite the rhetoric, the United States is left with an old plan.

The 2001 QDR is a posture statement cum plan that fluctuates between a decision on threat and capability-based strategies.<sup>40</sup> According to Title 10 United States Code, Section 118, the Quadrennial Defense Review is precisely just that – a plan for a strategy. The Secretary of Defense articulated such in his testimony before Congress. He underscored that the Department of Defense has not decided on a new military strategy and that the current one is not working.<sup>41</sup> A recent articulation of military strategy by the Secretary is quixotic. It relies on the past while simultaneously denoting a future without roots in the current war:

Before the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington, we had decided that to keep the peace and defend freedom in the 21<sup>st</sup> century our defense strategy and force structure must be focused on six transformational goals: First, to protect the U.S. homeland and our bases overseas. Second, to project and sustain power in distant theaters. Third, to deny our enemies sanctuary. Fourth, to protect our information systems from attack. Fifth, to use information technology to fight jointly. Sixth, to maintain unhindered access to space and protect our space capabilities. Our experience on September 11 and in the Afghan campaign serves to reinforce the importance of moving the defense posture in these directions. Our challenge in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is to defend our cities and infrastructure from new forms of attack while projecting forces over long distances.<sup>42</sup>

It is important to note that the six transformational goals are unchanged from before the September 11 attacks. Continuing to move towards these goals is a step backward except in



the case of transformation. It is deemed validated by the same attacks. The 21<sup>st</sup> century challenge is really sustaining a force for preemption and its volatile and uncertain aftermath.

The Secretary of Defense also cited that military goals are simply not to fight and win wars, but also to prevent them.<sup>43</sup> However, his definition of prevention is not that of the National Security Strategy, but rather that of containment. Finding ways to influence the decision-makers of potential adversaries by deterring and dissuading them from using existing weapons and building new capabilities is now at the forefront of military endeavors.<sup>44</sup> The National Security Strategy does not array armed force first among the elements of national power in time of war for diplomacy. It is worthwhile to note the inconsistency between the rhetoric of deter forward and the Secretary's focus on force projection. Both can be done. The question becomes what force structure can support both over time, and that is what is missing in both concepts. The Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff offered a draft National Military Strategy to the Secretary of Defense in September of 2002. It may be proactive in supporting preemption. However, the Secretary must have determined the 2001 QDR to be good enough. The merits of good enough are questionable today.

To its defense, the 2001 QDR quietly includes the possibility of regime change. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff also alludes to the ability to preempt against aggression on the next to the last page of the document.<sup>45</sup> Such vagueness cannot be understood as a strategy that molds military means into a force with the consistent capability to carry out and sustain preemptive operations. Barely brushing the surface of national strategy can only lead to a military that finds itself undermanned, inadequately equipped and trained, straining to handle contingency operations, and ill-prepared to adapt itself to a revolution in military affairs.<sup>46</sup>

Additionally, the 2001 QDR functioned only as a placeholder for the fiscal year 2002 budget request.<sup>47</sup> At the outset of the Quadrennial Defense Review, the administration indicated how much the Defense Department could spend. The result was a focus on preserving service shares of the budget rather than open-mindedly exploring new military strategies and roles for each service to play.<sup>48</sup> The Office of Management and Budget always sets departmental spending limits. This is how the resourcing for competing national needs occurs. It is a strategic decision. Nevertheless, a real military strategy could go a long way in procuring a higher spending limit. The tradition of conducting major defense reviews has not yielded a deeply revised strategy in response to the new shape of international relations.<sup>49</sup> The lack of a new strategy reveals a military recalcitrance to adjust to national policy.

## WHAT THE FRACTURE REVEALS

The existing fracture between the 2001 QDR and the National Security Strategy reveals that the Department of Defense does not fully appreciate the totality of the sea change in today's global environment. If it did, the reliance upon the tenets and goals of the 2001 QDR would be quickly cast aside in favor of a National Military Strategy that directly addresses national policy. Accurately addressing national policy today includes:

- Defining the military's new role within the context of the National Security Strategy and its sub-strategies as it relates to preemption
- Detailing the military force structure to fulfill that role
- Explaining how the fulfillment of the role could translate into long-term military commitments abroad

The National Military Strategy must provide an accurate depiction of how the military will function forward in areas of the world that are most threatening to American national interests. It will explain that these functions can occur without allies, without notice, and without diplomatic interlude. The National Military Strategy must also define the military requirements of security at home. The Armed Forces will always defend. However, the meaning of Assure, Dissuade, and Deter within the shadow of preemption is undefined. A portfolio of capabilities-based approaches has yet to emerge as a force structure modeled after agility. How America will respond and fight by region does not prepare the military for long-term commitments abroad during the War on Terrorism. Force structure is also an integral aspect of military strategy.

The National Military Strategy must put forth the force structure required for preemptive operations. Much is said about military force structure, but very little is done in a manner to meet the demands of the War on Terrorism. Force structure cannot flutter between the demands of reconstruction in Iraq today and a symmetric threat from a nation state in the future. It must be weighed against terrorists and the countries that harbor them now. The National Military Strategy must provide the design of a force structure that, despite size, can fulfill the role expected of it in securing national objectives. The design must cut through service parochialism, Active and Reserve Component demarcations, and self interest groups. Most of all, it must be a design for long-term commitment abroad.

Preemption engenders small wars that will require long-term military commitments in their aftermath. The most advanced technology and affirmation to the rightfulness of change will not solve the consequence of preemptive war – reconstruction. Only a National Military Strategy that recognizes the political object will. Reconstruction is a military function because the Department of Defense is the only agency that can operationally deal with it in an efficient

manner with the right resources. Furthermore, military victory is measured in the achievement of the overall political goal and associated termination objectives.<sup>50</sup> Iraq, following Panama, is only the most recent example of the reluctance of military leaders to consider the establishment of political and economic order as part of war itself.<sup>51</sup> The point is not academic. It is central to strategy and has profound implications for military planning and command arrangements.<sup>52</sup>

Clausewitz focuses principally on the why of war since wars are fought for political reasons. The how behind the linkage is equally important; reconstruction is the operational link needed to consolidate a state's final political aim in war.<sup>53</sup> Central to strategic victory in all wars fought by the United States has been the creation of a favorable political order, a process overseen and administered by U.S. military forces.<sup>54</sup> There is an obvious contradiction between acknowledging the contemporary strategic environment and asserting that war at the operational level in this environment will be militarily low-cost, low-risk, and efficient.<sup>55</sup> Realizing this could have produced a force structure realignment or growth after 11 September that would support the boots-on-the-ground requirements of American political objectives.

Defining the new military role today and its ancillary force structure for global commitment should follow strategy goals somewhat linked to national objectives in this time of war:

- Defeat terrorist networks
- Prevent the threat of WMD
- Foster regional stability
- Assure allies

Likewise, strategic tenets must also be adjusted to the new global environment:

- Leverage risk
- Use a projected first strike capability
- Defend the United States
- Sustain regional presence
- Strengthen alliances
- Transform Defense

Strategic military goals and tenets arranged along these lines are proactive. They lean forward to put face and form to military roles and force structure through alignment with the national strategy. A sense of wartime agility and the capacity for sustainable decisive action becomes more evident. A clearer concept of force sizing and distribution is also revealed.

Ultimately, the healing of this strategic fracture involves a restructuring of the military means in support of the political ends. It must be a restructuring that is introspective regarding

preemptive military requirements. It cannot reach to sensor-to-shooter prophecies now; rather it must adapt to reconstruction amid insurgency and evolve toward those prophecies. Certain beliefs about future war may have resurrected the old failed strategy of Vietnam cloaked in a new lexicon.<sup>56</sup> Such a strategy makes American military power extremely vulnerable. Policy can and should be made in Washington, but implementation today falls squarely within the United States military's mandate.<sup>57</sup>

## **MENDING THE STRATEGIC FRACTURE**

America is at war and does not know it.<sup>58</sup> The Department of Defense can mend this and the military rift with the national strategy. It can be done by publishing a National Military Strategy that defines the military as the first instrument of national power to be used within the context of the National Security Strategy. Specifically, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff by statute carries the formal responsibility to provide strategic military direction.<sup>59</sup> The new military strategy must contend with the political object as the critical element of military strategy because it establishes the roadmap for the direction to be taken.<sup>60</sup> After all, the theories of the American military man on war and policy have been strictly Clausewitzian since at least 1914.<sup>61</sup>

There cannot be a question about executive guidance. The National Security Strategy and its sub-strategies are linked and mutually supporting to provide guidance to executive branch agencies and departments.<sup>62</sup> Since the unclassified National Military Strategy remains the primary strategic direction document of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, it is only logical that it convey how the military will fulfill the requirements of the national strategy.<sup>63</sup> Military strategy cannot seek to remain simply a paradigm shift in force planning that does not recommend any changes to existing force structure, method of employment thereof, or modernization program only noting that as transformation matures will the Department of Defense explore additional opportunities to restructure and reorganize the Armed Forces.<sup>64</sup> The lack of a sound military strategy to transition from Cold War to a post-Cold War military is taking its toll and can no longer continue.<sup>65</sup>

Formal defense planning efforts such as quadrennial reviews exhibit inconsistencies between national strategy, force structure, and resources.<sup>66</sup> The nation is well into change and war. The political object and the world against which it is etched are undeniably clear. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff need only to draw from the political object to bridge the unexpected reality of a future faced today and the uncertainties left in tomorrow. The tension inherent in the new construct between the need to provide credible forces now and developing

capabilities for the future should be decisively resolved in favor of the former.<sup>67</sup> However, the matter of transformation cannot be ignored.

Drawing from the National Security Strategy also orders transformation. Transformation involves continuing processes and activities that create new sources of power yielding profound increases in competitive military advantage.<sup>68</sup> The emphasis here is on continuing since transformation is an adjunct of military strategy. Transformation does not subsume strategy; rather it works in tandem with it to overcome the very real threats America faces today. The power increases in transformation result from the discovery of new or fundamental rule sets.<sup>69</sup> Military strategy should address the dynamic realities of the War on Terror today by virtue of realigning the current force structure. As a result, transformation becomes a resource guide for the force structure needs of today by shaping the force through tomorrow. Transformation is about the same culture that is a determinant of strategy. It is behavior creating and exploiting promising concepts to provide new sources of military power<sup>70</sup>

Civilian policy makers determine the ends of national policy. They also allocate resources that the military might use to achieve those ends. The military will see those resources only after it develops an applicable strategy.<sup>71</sup> Military strategy forms structure that influences resources usually reserved for domestic programs. This is especially true in time of war. The military will cope with the twin challenges of the global War on Terror and transformation in a resource-constrained environment. However, military strategy that wins today and frames the future for success is very necessary now. Success comes with a price tag every time. Nevertheless, when a National Military Strategy is synchronized with national strategy, transparency exists for the American people. They can decide to bear the cost of policy or have the policy changed. The future of 1997 is here now. Change occurred and it must be faced with strategy not only plans. The magic of strategy does not lie in symmetry or asymmetry. It resides in relationships.<sup>72</sup>

## **CONCLUSION**

The United States does not have a cogent National Military Strategy. It possesses a Quadrennial Defense Report that is not military strategy because it does not draw direction from the national strategy. Historically, military strategic theory requires that a connective thread exist in the relationship between political ends and military means. This is especially critical in time of war and America is at war. The strategic relationship between national and military strategy is fractured because of the lack of just such a thread, and the rhetoric of transformation will not heal the wound. The Department of Defense does not appreciate the sea change in the

global environment or it would have aligned military strategy with the national strategy. Mending the strategic fracture requires that the Department of Defense publish a National Military Strategy that answers the call of the preemption corollary in the National Security Strategy regarding force structure and its resourcing.

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## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Michael Howard and Peter Paret, Eds. *Carl Von Clausewitz On War* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1984), 87.

<sup>2</sup> Russell F. Weigley, *The American Way of War; A History of United States Military Strategy and Policy* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1973), xvii.

<sup>3</sup> John Keegan, *A History of Warfare* (New York: Knopf, 1994), 12.

<sup>4</sup> Howard and Paret, 87.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas Greiss and Jay Luvaas, Eds, *The Art of War by Baron Von Jomini* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1971), 15.

<sup>6</sup> Weigley, 133.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 138.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, 141.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid

<sup>13</sup> Bernard Brodie, *War and Politics* (New York: Macmillan, 1973), 10.

<sup>14</sup> Gabriel Marcella, "National Security and the Interagency Process," *United States Army War College Core Curriculum; War, National Security Policy, and Strategy* (August, 2003), 273-296.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> John W. Chambers, Ed, *The Oxford Companion to American Military History*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 676.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, 678.

<sup>18</sup> William J. Clinton, *A National Security Strategy for a New Century*, (Washington, D.C.: The White House, October, 1998).

<sup>19</sup> The ideas expressed here are based on remarks made by a speaker participating in the Commandant's Lecture Series.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.



<sup>21</sup> George W. Bush, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, (Washington, D.C.: The White House, September, 2002) 1.

<sup>22</sup> Ralph A. Cossa, "Regime Change / Preemption Vs. Disarmament / Multilateralism: The U.S. Foreign Policy Debate Continues," 3d Quarter 2002; available from <http://www.csis.org/pacfor/cc/0203Qoverview.html> ; Internet; accessed 27 October 2003.

<sup>23</sup> Raphael Perl, "Terrorism, the Future, and U.S. Foreign Policy," Issue Brief for Congress, 11 April 2003: 12 [database on-line]; available from Congressional Research Service, The Library of Congress. Accessed 28 October 2003.

<sup>24</sup> Bush, 2.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> H.R. McMaster, "A Crack in the Foundation" electronic mail message to [xavier.lobeto@us.army.mil](mailto:xavier.lobeto@us.army.mil). 14 October 2003.

<sup>27</sup> George W. Bush, *The National Strategy for Homeland Security*, (Washington, D.C.: The White House, October, 2002), vii – 2.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> The ideas in this paragraph are based on remarks made by a speaker participating in the Commandant's Lecture Series.

<sup>30</sup> George W. Bush, *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism*, (Washington, D.C.: The White House, February, 2003), 11-17.

<sup>31</sup> George W. Bush, *National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction*, (Washington, D.C.: The White House, December, 2002), 2-3.

<sup>32</sup> Thomas Brown [Thomas.Brown@carlisle.army.mil](mailto:Thomas.Brown@carlisle.army.mil), "EXSUM (U) NMS and the FY 04 NDAA," electronic mail message from Thomas Brown. 24 November 2003.

<sup>33</sup> Donald H. Rumsfeld, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report*, (Washington, D.C.: The Pentagon, 30 September, 2001), 11.

<sup>34</sup> Larry Blotzer, "Deterrence In The 21<sup>st</sup> Century," *The Collins Center Update*, (March 200): 2.

<sup>35</sup> Rumsfeld, 11.

<sup>36</sup> Donald H. Rumsfeld, *2002 ADR Message from the Secretary of Defense*, available from [http://www.defenselink.mil/execsec/adr2002/html\\_files/Message.htm](http://www.defenselink.mil/execsec/adr2002/html_files/Message.htm); Internet; accessed 6 November 2003.

<sup>37</sup> McMaster, 10.

<sup>38</sup> Arthur Cebrowski, "Planning A Revolution: Mapping The Pentagon's Transformation", lecture, Washington, D.C., Heritage Foundation, 13 May 2003.

<sup>39</sup> McMaster, 8.

<sup>40</sup> Congress: Committee on Armed Services, *U.S. National Security Strategy and the Quadrennial Defense Review*, 107<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2d Session, 21 June 2001. 17.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, 21.

<sup>42</sup> Donald H. Rumsfeld, "21<sup>st</sup> Century Transformation of the Armed Forces," Fort McNair, Washington, D.C., National Defense University, 31 January 2002.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Rumsfeld, 2001 QDR, 69.

<sup>46</sup> Thomas Donnelly, Donald Kagan, and Gary Schmitt, "Rebuilding America's Defenses; Strategy, Forces, and Resources for a New Century", September 2000; available from <http://www.newamericancentury.org/RebuildingAmericasDefenses.pdf>; Internet; accessed 14 September 2003.

<sup>47</sup> Daniel Smith, "Why We Need A Real Defense Review In 2001"; available from <<http://www.cdi.org/issues/qdr/whynneed2001.html>>; Internet; accessed 12 September 2003.

<sup>48</sup> Marcus Corbin, "Whither the Next National Military Strategy?" 2000; available from <http://www.cdi.org/dm/2000/issue9/qdrdm.html>; Internet; Accessed 27 October 2003.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Doctrine for Joint Operations*, Joint Pub 3-0 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, 10 September 2001. I-11.

<sup>51</sup> Nadia Schadlow, "War and the Art of Governance." *Parameters* 3 (Autumn 2003):85.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid, 92.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, 86.

<sup>55</sup> McMaster, 9.

<sup>56</sup> McMaster, 57.

<sup>57</sup> Schadlow, 92.

<sup>58</sup> The idea in this sentence is based on remarks made by a speaker participating in the Commandant's Lecture Series.

<sup>59</sup> *Armed forces, General Military Law and Powers, U.S. Code*, Chapter 5, sec.153 (1986).

<sup>60</sup> Peter Paret, ed., *Makers of Modern Strategy from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1986) 12.

<sup>61</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, *The soldier and the State*, 19<sup>th</sup> ed. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2002) 262.

<sup>62</sup> Bush, *National Strategy for Homeland Security*, 5.

<sup>63</sup> Richard M. Meinhart, Chairmen *Joint Chiefs of Staff's Leadership Using The Joint Strategic Planning System in the 1990's*. United States Army War College Strategic Studies Institute monograph (June 2003) 8.

<sup>64</sup> Michael Vickers, "The 2001 Quadrennial Defense Review, The 2003 Budget Request, and the Way Ahead," 19 June 2002, available from <http://www.csbaonline.org/4publications/archive/B.20020619>; Internet; accessed 18 September 2003.

<sup>65</sup> McMaster, 21.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Vickers.

<sup>68</sup> Clarence A. Robinson, "Military Marches toward Agility," *Signal* (May 2003) Vol. 57, 16.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Huntington, 249.

<sup>72</sup> Colin S.Gray, "Thinking Asymmetrically in Times of Terror," *Parameters*, Vol. 32, 13.

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